

## **PM makes no apologies for passing Sosma, NSC**

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Prime Minister Najib Abdul Razak said he "makes no apologies" for passing security acts such as the Security Offences (Special Measures) Act and the National Security Council (NSC) Act.

"Let me be clear, I make no apologies for making the security and safety of all Malaysians my first priority," he said in his keynote address at the International Youth Discourse held at the Putra World Trade Centre (PWTC) today.

He cited the examples of Sosma, NSC as well as the Prevention of Terrorism Act (Pota) and the Special Measures against Terrorism in Foreign Countries Act as laws the government had passed to deter extremist group Islamic State recruitment and activities.

Several other countries, he said, had to rush to pass new laws when the threat of IS grew.

Not Malaysia, he said, as we already have legislations to deal with such threats swiftly and early.

"We had already done so (passed legislation) in order that the misguided attempts of those who want to bomb, maim and behead can never be placed above the rights of the peaceful majority who firmly reject violence and war," Najib said.

Sosma is currently under the spotlight again with the detention of Bersih chairperson Maria Chin Abdullah under the act, which allows her to be held up to 28 days.

She is also being held in solitary confinement, which has been criticised by various civil societies as well as opposition leaders.

Maria was first detained on the eve of the Bersih 5 rally, which Malaysiakini estimates numbered 40,000-strong at its peak.

The NSC Act, which was gazetted earlier this year, had also been criticised for having vague wording and provisions.

Critics also worry that it may place too much power in the prime minister's hands. The act bypassed royal oversight.

Meanwhile, in his speech today, Najib also addressed the radicalisation of youths in the country.

"When young people feel marginalised, extreme ideologies can give them a sense of purpose, a sense of importance, a sense of identity and belonging.

"These are false promises," he said.

However, he acknowledged that the vulnerabilities felt by youths are real and extremist groups know how to exploit it.

Aside from enacting laws such as Sosma, Pota and NSC to prevent the radicalisation of youths, he said the government was taking other steps as well.

"We know that prevention is not just a matter of force. We must win hearts and minds as well," he said.

The government has also set up a regional digital counter-messaging centre to synchronise efforts to counter radical social media messages, he said.

They have also, he said, devised a special rehabilitation module and a deradicalisation programme.

Of the 100 people who went through the deradicalisation programme, only less than 10 have turned back to extremism, he said.

"The vast majority are working towards building peaceful, constructive lives and have turned their backs on terror," he said.

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